

Ricola moves forward with new product development plans

By **Jas Ryat** on May, 18 2020 | Confectionery & Fine Foods



Recognizing COVID-19 as a temporary setback to strong growth in the channel, Ricola continues plans for new retail exclusives

The expert in Swiss herb products is pressing on with its mission to release new products into travel retail markets, despite the continued barriers being put up by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following a recent design refresh of packaging on key products, Ricola has released a 200-gram assortment sugar-free tin into its travel retail range this month. The tin features a fresh new design combining images of its herbal heritage with “travel motif” graphics.

Also, new to the travel retail channel from Ricola this month is a multi-pack containing three limited edition 75-gram tins in the flavors of Original Herb, Lemon Mint and Cranberry. This multi-pack release builds on the success of these three products in travel retail in 2019, when they were Ricola’s best-performing items in the channel.

Looking ahead, Ricola has revealed early details of a travel retail exclusive scheduled for an early 2021 release. In a 90-gram weight, the iconic Original Herb and Lemon Mint flavor tins will contain sugar for the first time.

Andreas Reckart, Vice President Sales Middle East & Travel Retail for Ricola AG says: “So far our focus was on our sugar-free range, but we believe that there is also a sizeable market for sugar products. We are taking the opportunity to close this gap in our portfolio and expand the appeal of our confectionery.”

By the end of February 2020 Ricola’s travel retail sales volumes were almost +150% ahead of the same period last year, but COVID-19 has stalled Ricola’s rapid expansion in the channel.

However, Reckart is looking forward to building up momentum once again.

“It’s so encouraging to see the fast response of the airport and aviation industry in introducing measures to restore passenger confidence.

Individual players in the aviation sector are starting to communicate hygiene messages and the advances in COVID-19 prevention and testing really well. That’s great news for all of us operating in travel retail – there is light at the end of the tunnel.

From Q3 onwards we hope for a gradual recovery starting with our business in Asia and then hopefully expanding to the rest of the world. To be in position for this to happen, we are staying in close contact with our customers and distributors.

Launching new products such as the 200g assorted tin and the multipack containing three classic flavors will give us impetus as airport activity begins to recover. Many of our products are stationed in impulse purchase positions near checkouts in travel retail stores, so we will be in good shape to capture some of the early business when the tills start ringing again,” he concludes.